

Home and Community-Based Services

Adult Mental Health



Guide for a

Mental Health Crisis



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



What is a Mental Health Crisis?

A crisis is a situation in which one or more of the following happens:

- A person presents an immediate danger to self or others.
- A person's mental or physical health is at risk of serious deterioration.
- A person believes he or she presents an immediate danger to self or others or his or her mental or physical health is at risk of serious deterioration.

A crisis can also be defined as a situation that overwhelms a person's usual coping strategies when confronting demanding or stressful situations.

During a crisis, a person's behavior might put them at risk of hurting themselves or others and/or prevent them from being able to care for themselves effectively in the community. It is important to address a mental health emergency quickly and effectively.

Warning Signs of a Mental Health Crisis

It is important to know and recognize the warning signs a person might be exhibiting so you can support them in the best way possible. However, in some instances, there might not be any warning signs.

According to National Alliance on Mental Illness, these are the most common warning signs:

- Inability to perform daily tasks, such as bathing, getting dressed, etc.
- Rapid mood swings.
- Increased agitation, risk taking, or out-of-control behavior.
- Abusive behavior to self or someone else.
- Isolation from school, work, family and friends.
- Loss of touch with reality.
- Paranoia.
- Increase in substance use.
- Changes in sleep and/or appetite.

When the Crisis Involves the Risk of Suicide

Risk of suicide is a concern for anyone, with or without a mental health condition, and those who love them. Encouraging someone

to get help is the first step toward safety.

Any talk of suicide **MUST** be taken seriously. The risk is even greater if someone has attempted suicide in the past or if the person has access to lethal means. If you suspect someone is at risk for suicide:

- Ask directly about thoughts or plans for suicide such as, "Are you having thoughts about suicide?"
- Listen and be nonjudgmental.
- Believe what they say.
- Offer hope.
- Get help and stay with them until help is available.

Techniques that Might Help De-escalate a Crisis

Remember these important techniques in the event of a crisis. You are there to listen, be supportive, and get the person the help they need. Do your best to remain calm and let them know you are there for them.

- Keep your voice calm.
- Avoid overreacting.
- Listen to the person.
- Express support and concern.
- Ask how you can help.
- Offer options instead of trying to take control.

- Be patient.
- Avoid touching the person unless you ask permission.
- Give them space, don't make them feel trapped.
- Don't argue or try to reason with the person.
- Keep your hands visible.

When to Call 911 or a Local Crisis Team

Evaluate the situation to determine if immediate intervention is needed and/or if the person is an immediate danger to themselves or someone else. Do not hesitate to call 911 and/or a local mental health authority or local behavioral health authority crisis hotline number to notify you are with someone experiencing a mental health crisis. If you call 911, ask for a mental health officer.

When you contact an LMHA or LBHA crisis hotline number, the

hotline staff will ask questions to determine the nature and seriousness of the call. If they determine there is a crisis, they will activate the crisis response system, which might include the mobile crisis outreach team, and/or emergency services (911, law enforcement). MCOT is dispatched to meet people experiencing a crisis in the community, to assess the situation further, to make recommendations for the least restrictive treatment, and to coordinate linkage to appropriate services.

Information you might need to communicate about the person experiencing the crisis should include:

- Description of the person's current behavior and observable symptoms, including delusions, hallucinations, or loss of touch with reality.
- Description of a person's current threats or attempts to harm themselves and/or others.
- The person's current access to means of harm toward themselves and/or others.
- The status of the person's current mental health treatment, including current diagnosis and medications.
- History of past suicide attempts or violence toward others.





- History of mental health treatment and services, including what has helped in the past.
- The person's current substance use and any past treatment.

You can also assist a person with going to the LMHA, LBHA or emergency room to receive a crisis assessment with their cooperation. If the person is not in immediate danger, you can reach out to their therapist, doctor or psychiatrist if they have one. You can also call a local crisis team if you suspect or are unsure if the person is in a crisis.

Following a Crisis

A critical part after a crisis is an appointment with a mental health professional. If the person was admitted to a mental health facility, their discharge plan should include this appointment,

typically, within seven days of being discharged. This and other appointments should be made before the person leaves the facility or community location where crisis services were received. If the person was not admitted to a mental health facility, it is recommended they receive a follow-up appointment, typically within 24 hours of their interaction with crisis services.

To assist the mental health professional at the follow-up appointment, the following information is helpful:

- Names of all medications – purpose of medication, dosage and side effects experienced.
- Any changes in living situation.
- Access to transportation.
- If the crisis/safety plan continues to meet the needs of the person.
- How other medical conditions are being managed.

It is important to remember crisis services are meant to help those experiencing a mental health crisis or have been diagnosed with a mental illness get the help they need in a safe setting. Recovery is real and is a process that requires ongoing care, treatment and support.

LMHA and LBHA Mental Health Crisis Numbers

LMHA or LBHA Facility	Phone number	LMHA or LBHA Facility	Phone number
Burke Center	800-392-8343	MHMR of Tarrant County	800-866-2465 <i>or</i> 817-335-3022
Camino Real Community Services	800-543-5750	MHMR Services for the Concho Valley	800-375-8965 <i>or</i> 325-653-5933
The Center for Health Care Services	800-316-9241	North Texas Behavioral Health Authority	866-260-8000
Center for Life Resources	800-458-7788	Nueces Center for Mental Health & Intellectual Disabilities	888-767-4493
Central Counties Services	800-888-4036	Pecan Valley Centers for Behavioral & Developmental HealthCare	800-772-5987
Central Plains Center	800-687-1300	Permian Basin Community Centers for MHMR	800-542-4005 <i>or</i> 877-475-7322
Coastal Plains Community Center	800-841-6467	Spindletop Center	800-937-8097 <i>or</i> 409-838-1818
Community Healthcore	800-832-1009	StarCare Specialty Health System	806-740-1414 <i>or</i> 800-687-7581
Denton County MHMR Center	800-762-0157	Texana Center	800-633-5686
Emergence Health Network	877-562-6467	Texas Panhandle Centers	800-692-4039 <i>or</i> 806-359-6699
Gulf Bend Center	877-723-3422	Texoma Community Center	877-277-2226
Gulf Coast Center	866-729-3848	The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD	713-970-7000
Heart of Texas Region MHMR Center	866-752-3451	Tri-County Services	800-659-6994
Helen Farabee Centers	800-621-8504	Tropical Texas Behavioral Health	877-289-7199
Hill Country Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities Centers	877-466-0660	West Texas Centers	800-375-4357
Lakes Regional MHMR Center	877-466-0660		
LifePath Systems	877-422-5939		
MHMR Authority of Brazos Valley	888-522-8262		

Resources for Mental Health Crisis Concerns

2-1-1, option 8
or visit 211texas.org

Crisis Text Line

crisistextline.org

Text TX to 741741, available 24/7.

Local Mental Health or Behavioral Health Authority Crisis Hotlines

(see above) – available 24/7.

Mental Health Services Search

hhs.texas.gov/find-lmha-bha

National Human Trafficking Hotline

humantraffickinghotline.org

888-373-7888; available 24/7.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

800-273-8255 (TTY: 800-799-4889)

available 24/7.

The Trevor Project

(for LGBTQ young people)

thetrevorproject.org

866-488-7386

Text **START** to 678678 **or**
chat online at Trevor

Project online chat,
[thetrevorproject.org/
get-help-now/](https://thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/)

Veterans Crisis Line

veteranscrisisline.net

800-273-8255, press 1;

available 24/7.

Phone Apps

All phone apps available on Apple App Store and Google Play

Breathe2Relax



Stress management tools
and exercises

Columbia Protocol



The Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale, the most evidence-supported tool of its kind, is a simple series of questions anyone can use anywhere in the world to help prevent suicide.

My3 – Support Network



Allows the person to define and connect with their own personal support network and safety plan in a time of crisis.

Self-help Anxiety Management



Helps people manage anxiety

Suicide Safe by SAMHSA



Practical tips for parents
and caregivers

Texas Veterans



Access local, state and
national resources

Virtual Hope Box



Stores personal messages, information
and pictures to promote mental
wellness and crisis support



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hhs.texas.gov/hcbs-amh | HCBS-AMH.Services@hhsc.state.tx.us